

REMARKS

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's thorough consideration provided the present application. Claims 1-5, 7-11 and 13-15 are present in the application. Claims 1, 7, 11 and 13 have been amended. Claims 6 and 12 have been cancelled. Claims 1, 2 and 11 are independent. Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has indicated that claims 2-4 and 10 are allowed. The Examiner has also indicated that dependent claims 6-9 and 12-15 would be allowable if rewritten to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant appreciates the indication of allowable subject matter by the Examiner.

By the present amendment, independent claims 1 and 11 have been amended to include the subject matter of allowable dependent claims 6 and 12, respectively, as described hereinbelow..

Drawings

The Examiner did not indicate whether or not the formal drawings have been accepted. Since no objection has been received, Applicants assume that the drawings are acceptable and that no further action is necessary. Confirmation thereof in the next Office Action is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 5 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's disclosed conventional art in view of Endres et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,426,972. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

A complete discussion of the Examiner's rejection is set forth in the Office Action, and is not being repeated here.

As mentioned, independent claims 1 and 11 have been amended to include the subject matter of dependent claims 6 and 12, which were indicated by the Examiner as including allowable subject matter. Accordingly, it is believed that amended independent claims 1 and 11 and dependent claim 5 (due to its dependency from claim 1) are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 are respectfully requested.

Additional Cited References

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but rather to merely show the state of the art, no further comments are necessary with respect thereto.

CONCLUSION

All the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed and/or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently pending rejections and that they be withdrawn.

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

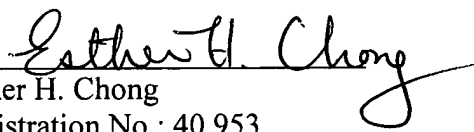
In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

Applicant respectfully petition under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) and § 1.17 for a one-month extension of time in which to respond to the Examiner's Office Action. The Extension of Time Fee in the amount of \$ 120.00 is attached hereto.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: January 3, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 
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